

UPF Geneva, Switzerland: Swiss Posit Neutrality as Path to Korea Peace

Chantal Chételat Komagata
June 20, 2023



Geneva, Switzerland -- Experts set out proposals for Korean reunification during a discussion co-sponsored by UPF.

Together with the International Network for a Neutral Korea (INNK), the Swiss chapter of UPF held the event in its offices in Geneva. The date, June 20, 2023, was chosen to commemorate the start of the fratricidal Korean War 73 years earlier.

The conference, which took place parallel to the 53rd session of the United Nations Human Rights Council, located in Geneva, was titled "Toward the Enhancement of Human Rights in North Korea -- Neutrality of the Two Koreas as a Path to Lasting Peace."

In addition to the audience that gathered at the UPF offices, a number of viewers participated online via Zoom or Facebook.



Mrs. Chantal Chételat Komagata, Coordinator, UPF Central Europe

Chantal Chételat Komagata, coordinator of UPF-Central Europe, recalled the UPF founders' efforts over the past decades to reunify the Korean Peninsula in order to overcome the divisions between conflicting ideologies in the world.

This was the third conference that UPF had organized on the theme of Korean neutrality, Mrs. Komagata said. The many reflections and talks from experts had given access to a deeper understanding of what neutrality can be and how it can be applied to the Korean Peninsula, she said.

Two of the panelists of the June 20 meeting had flown from South Korea and had just completed a seven-day visit to the neutral nations of Switzerland and Austria, with six other advocates, to investigate neutrality on the ground. What they reported are their conclusions and vision of a neutral peninsula leading to peace, security, unification and human rights.



Dr. Sang Woo Lim, Acting Secretary-General, International Network for Neutral Korea (INNK)

The first speaker was the acting secretary general of the co-sponsoring organization, INNK: **Dr. Sang Woo Lim, Ph.D.**, a former vice president of Sogang University in Seoul, South Korea, as well as a professor emeritus in the History Department of that same university.

His speech, "Neutrality and Self-Determination of the Two Koreas for Peace in Northeast Asia," was divided into five sections:

- Permanent Neutrality and the Confederation of Korean States;
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- The Principle of "Neutrality First, Unification Next";
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- Rights and Duties as a Neutral Country;
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- Peace Treaty of the Korean Peninsula as a Peace-Making Solution; and
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- Korea Economic Community and Northeast Asia Free Economic Zone.
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His speech presented a very clear roadmap for going forward, and it seemed that this could be realized within a short period of time if the governments on each side were ready to act.

[Click here for the full intervention of Professor Sang Woo Lim](#)



Dr. Vana Kim Hansen (Ed.D.), Co-chair, Council for neutral unified Korea

Dr. Vana Kim Hansen, Ed.D., co-chair of the Council for a Neutral Unified Korea, coordinator of the 2023 INNK Swiss-Austria civilian diplomacy, and co-organizer of the 2015 Women Cross DMZ, spoke on "Neutrality as a Path toward South Korean Self-Determination for Peace in Northeast Asia."

Neutrality is the path toward South Korea's self-determination, she said, emphasizing the spiritual-mental-emotional component of the process. She touched the hearts of the participants when mentioning *Hongik Ingan* ("To broadly benefit the human world"), the official educational motto of South Korea, and the common heritage that both Koreas have had for thousands of years. Things could change quickly if the awareness of the people on the peninsula could be raised to a higher state, she said.

[Click here for the full intervention of Dr. Vana Kim Hansen](#)



Heiner Handschin, Coordinator of IAPD for Europe and the Middle East

Heiner Handschin, the president of UPF-Switzerland and the UPF liaison with the UN office in Geneva, spoke of the many projects and events that UPF and its affiliated organization Women's Federation for World Peace (WFWP) have undertaken in the past 20 years to promote and contribute to peace on the Korean Peninsula. He mentioned the need for the United Nations to open a fifth office in Asia and pointed to the Demilitarized Zone as the optimal place for that, as it would create a neutral buffer and international meeting place on the 38th parallel.

[Click here for the presentation of Mr. Heiner Handschin](#)



Dr. Claude Béglé, Founder and President, Symbioswiss; former Member of Parliament, Switzerland

Dr. Claude Béglé, a former member of the Federal Assembly (the Swiss parliament) and the chairman of Swiss NeWater and SymbioSwiss, started off speaking of Swiss neutrality, which sometimes was used as a selfish tool but became brilliant after World War II as it allowed Switzerland to be a mediator between many powers and a possible role-player in the reunification of the Korean Peninsula. He then responded to a few of the statements made by the three speakers.

Dr. Béglé agreed with 90 percent of Dr. Lim's statements, about permanent neutrality linked to the right of self-determination; the confederation of one nation with two states; and the economic aspect, indispensable in order to build bridges between the two states and eliminate disparities.



However, he questioned the joint foreign policy between "South Korea, a puppet of the U.S., and North Korea, a puppet of self and of China." Just as with the leveling of the economies, he assumed that self-defense would take time and that the emphasis should be put on economy first and only later on foreign policy and self-defense. He also hinted at the difficulty of both Koreas to get out of the thinking that it is right and the other is wrong, and to focus on the best way to get rid of the tutors, who "had been invited but needed to leave."



Dr. Béglé agreed with Dr. Hansen's assumption that South Korea had made a huge contribution to the U.S. He appreciated her mentioning the spiritual-mental-emotional aspect of the issue. Dr. Béglé agreed that there is a need to emphasize "the founding ideology, the same original culture, as a solid base to build

again a common identity," using the long common ground as the key element to erase what has happened since the end of World War II. He also agreed that reconciliation should be undertaken using baby steps.

With Mr. Handschin, Dr. Béglé agreed that the division of Korea was not acceptable and that the United States was more involved than the others in the four-party talks, as it had strategic interests in being present in the region to protect its value system in front of Russia and China. Things have changed and both Koreas have grown up, Dr. Béglé said; therefore, the presence of the superpowers is no longer necessary. He also stressed the need to enter into a dialogue and not to discuss the nuclear situation in the primary approach; common projects and prosperity would end up building a bridge.

Dr. Béglé then listed the points on which the Swiss model can be an inspiration for Korea:

- Its democracy, beyond just elections, goes all the way to asking the opinion of all nationals on matters both trivial and very serious, after holding debates to foster people's personal opinions. The last word is not that of the parliament or government but of the people.
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- Its decentralization. He gave as an example that there is no national ministry of education; instead, the authority is delegated to the 26 cantons, thus conferring autonomy on each region.
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- Its principle of "rule and disappear," or modesty -- which he said is not in the Korean DNA and is very difficult to learn.
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Finally, he expressed his personal opinion that the problem of the two Koreas is not hatred of each other but the fact of being "hostages of the worldwide fight" and "a buffer between the mighty" in the middle of the U.S.-China conflict.

Dr. Béglé said that he became pessimistic with the increasing hostility of the superpowers, and he didn't believe the unification of Korea would bring peace in Northeast Asia, as Korea is not the cause but the victim. He hoped for pacification between the main protagonists, US-China-Russia, and advised the two Koreas not to fight with each other as their interests lie in waiting for "the masters to calm down."

The conference ended with questions from the audience, both in the UPF office and online. It all led to an increased awareness that we all can contribute in some way, in our respective organizations, to peace on the Korean Peninsula, in Northeast Asia and in the world.





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Intervention of Professor Sang Woo Lim at the UPF Switzerland Conference in Geneva on 20 June 2023

Written by: Professor Sang Woo Lim, Acting Secretary General, International Network for Neutral Korea (INNK)

20 June 2023



Neutrality and Self-determination of the two Koreas for Peace in Northeast Asia - A Proposal for INNK's Program

by Professor Sang Woo Lim, Acting Secretary General, International Network for Neutral Korea (INNK).

We have the conviction that the way to overcome, once and for all, the antagonistic confrontation on the Korean Peninsula lies in the permanent neutrality of the two Koreas. Once achieved, neutrality will guarantee both states' security and prosperity, and the true independence of self-determination and the eventual reunification of the Korean people can be attained. We also believe that this neutral buffer zone of the Korean Peninsula will set the stage for peace in Northeast Asia.

1. Permanent Neutrality and the 'Confederation of Korean States'

- a) South Korea and North Korea should simultaneously declare to the world that they are permanently neutral as independent countries with the right to self-determination.
- b) To insure and to sustain their neutrality, the two Koreas, each as an autonomous state, should form a 'Confederation of Korean States,' a similar confederacy to the European Union. This will serve as an essential premise for reunification and the 'one-nation, two-state system' principle will be maintained until reunification.
- c) The Confederation is responsible for maintaining neutrality, economic exchanges, and establishing conditions for reunification. The autonomous governments of both states are bound in this respect by the resolutions of the Confederation.

2. The Principle of 'Neutrality First, Unification Next'

- a) With the 'one nation, two states' principle, the 'neutrality first, then unification' principle should also be observed.
- b) The reason for these two principles is that Koreans must solve the various obstacles and problems before they come together for reunification. They need to secure the full sovereignty of both states and eliminate the disparities between South and North Korea. Moreover, they have to denuclearize the Korean Peninsula, withdraw foreign forces from the peninsula, and so on.
- c) Creating the conditions for reconciliation requires considerable time and effort. The premise of reunification can only be realized if the neutrality of both States is reached first.

3. Rights and Duties as a Neutral Country

- a) The rights and obligations of neutral Korea can follow example of Switzerland, Austria and other neutral countries.
- b) Neutrality includes, among other things, the principles of non-aggression to other countries and absence of military alliance, of invasion by other countries, of foreign military presence and bases, and possession of minimum national defense capabilities.
- c) In the case of foreign aggression, it responds by self-defense based on international guarantees.

4. 'Peace Treaty of the Korean Peninsula' as Peace Making Solution

- a) The Korean War has been in a state of a cease-fire since 1953. Peace on the Korean Peninsula can only be achieved when a 'Peace Treaty on the Korean Peninsula' is signed by a collective agreement among the four major belligerents in the War. These include South Korea, North Korea, the United States, and China.
- b) The Treaty should include the declaration of the finalization of war and non-aggression on the Korean Peninsula from outside and inside, so that the Peninsula should work as a buffer zone that ensures peace between continental and maritime powers.
- c) The denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula can only be addressed through the self-determined sovereignty of South and North Korea. Only then will peace be achieved in Northeast Asia.
- d) The above attributes of a peace plan in the Korean Peninsula and in Northeast Asia should be negotiated and resolved at the same peace table, although the process of negotiations for the treaty might require a prolonged period of time. And this should include the completion of the war, the recognition of self-determining sovereignty, non-aggression, the procedure for the withdrawal of foreign forces, and the procedure for the region's denuclearization.

5. 'Korea Economic Community' and 'Northeast Asia Free Economic Zone'

- a) South and North Korea will seek shared prosperity by building an economic community like the European Economic Community or the European Union under the confederal system. Improving the economy will enhance human rights in South Korea and in North Korea.
- b) The next step is establishing the 'Northeast Asia Free Economic Zone' to attract worldwide free trade and investment, to promote economic development in the region, to improve the quality of life of the people of Northeast Asia, and, in so doing, to set an example for world peace.

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Intervention of Dr. Vana Kim Hansen at the UPF Switzerland Conference in Geneva on 20 June 2023

Written by: Dr. Vana Kim Hansen. Coordinator, International Network for Neutral Korea (INNK)
20 June 2023

The Road to Permanent Neutrality for South Korea's Self-determination and Peace in Northeast Asia - An outline for INNK's program.



I strongly agree that the permanent neutrality of the two Koreas is essential to create a buffer zone to prevent military clashes in Northeast Asia, which is urgent. For this to happen, South Korea has a crucial role to play. South Korea has the right to self-determination and to become an independent country. Their divine duty is to "benefit the world," according to their original identity of "Hongik-Ingan".

- South Korea's right to self-determination is crucial for Northeast Asian peace.
 - Most South Koreans believe they have the right to self-determination and independence. All the independence fighters historically fought and sacrificed their lives in that spirit. And this fight goes on today. The exception is those with something to gain from being subject to the superpowers.
 - South Korea is obligated to self-determination and become independent, because it is not an island; its decision affects all other countries surrounding it in one way or another.
 - South Korea's failure to exercise its right and duty of self-determination perpetuates the Cold War in Northeast Asia. And today, due to the conflict of hegemony between the United States and China, South Korea's acceptance of its right and duty to self-determination is manifestly imperative.
- Permanent neutrality as a reasonable path to South Korea's self-determination
 - Neutral Korea is a noble path and a hope for the world as it will guarantee permanent peace in Northeast Asia.
 - The vision of a neutral Korea can give both North and South Korea a shared sense of destiny and a common cause. The dream of becoming a neutral Korea makes taking small steps to get the two Koreas out of the current dead end possible. The current deadly conflict is devastating and absurdly expensive.
 - Becoming a neutral country such as Switzerland would encourage the people of South Korea to exercise their right to self-determination peacefully, without fighting violently for it.
- Psycho-emotional independence of South Korea's self-determination from the United States.
 - Psycho-emotional independence is about value. This signifies the 'soft power' for which South Korea is already well known. This is necessary to counteract the game of 'hard power' warfare. This means South Koreans are stepping back from the existing individual and societal relationship with the US.
 - South Koreans have much to offer the world, particularly the United States. Korean people are increasingly aware of their positive impact on today's world.
 - The International Network for Neutral Korea (INNK) presents a new vision to South Koreans and the world. The psycho-emotional independence approach links it to "permanent neutrality for South Korean self-determination."
- The identity of "Hongik-Ingan" for the sustainable transformation and international leadership of the new

South Korea.

- a) "Hongik-Ingan" has been the Korean identity for thousands of years. "Hongik Ingan" is the Go-joseon dynasty's founding ideology in the history of Dangun and the fundamental doctrine of education laid down by the Education Act of the Republic of Korea. "Hongik-Ingan" is a humanist ideology, consisting of altruistic ethics and lay thought, prioritizing the present life.
- b) "Hongik-Ingan" is a term of non-religious value that can become a source of inspiration for all Koreans and people worldwide.
- c) The Korean wave "Hallyu" is paving the way. Now, we are here with the flag of "South Korean Self-Determination" as the ultimate way to create an enlightened civilization.

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